



**City of Cambridge
File No. 11604**

RFI for Small Business Technical Assistance Programming

The City of Cambridge (“City”) invites and welcomes responses prior to **11:00 a.m. on Thursday, June 27, 2024** to provide the following information:

The purpose of this Request for Information (“RFI”) is to elicit the advice and best analysis of knowledgeable persons in the vendor community to enable the City of Cambridge Community Development Department to understand the available business education opportunities and workshops in the community.

Copies of the Request for Information (“RFI”) may be obtained at the Office of the Purchasing Agent on or after **11:00 a.m., Thursday, June 06, 2024**. This RFI may be downloaded from the City’s website: www.cambridgema.gov, online services, Purchasing Bid List, Regular RFP, **File No.11604**. This is not a solicitation of quotes, invitation for bids, or request for proposals and no contract will be executed as a result of this Request for Information. This RFI is for market research purposes only and does not constitute an offer by the City of Cambridge to perform the tasks or provide the supplies listed in this RFI.

Questions concerning the RFI must be submitted in writing by 11:00 AM. on Wednesday, June 19, 2024 to Elizabeth L. Unger, Purchasing Agent, at the address above, or by email to Purchasing@cambridgema.gov. Answers to substantive questions will be posted to the website in the form of an addendum. It is the responsibility of all respondents to check the website for addenda.

Electronic copies should be submitted by 11:00 a.m. June 27, 2024 via e-mail to purchasing@cambridgema.gov. Respondents may also submit hard copies to the Office of the Purchasing Agent, City Hall, 795 Massachusetts Avenue, Cambridge Massachusetts 02139. Responses being hand delivered or sent via courier (other than USPS) may be delivered in person to 5 Bigelow Street, Cambridge, MA during normal business hours. Responses received after the RFI due date will be accepted at the sole discretion of the City. Please label “RFI for Small Business Technical Assistance Programming, File No. 11604”.

Elizabeth L. Unger, Purchasing Agent City of Cambridge

Confidentiality and Public Records Law

All responses to this RFI will be public record under the Commonwealth’s Public Records Law, Mass. Gen. L. Ch. 66 s. 10, regardless of confidentiality notices set forth on such writings to the contrary.

General Instructions

Please note that this RFI is issued solely for the purpose of obtaining information. Nothing in this RFI shall be interpreted as a commitment on the part of the city to enter a contract with any respondent or to conduct any procurement.

- a) This RFI has been posted on Thursday, June 6, 2024 after 11:00 a.m.
- b) Respondent Questions. Potential respondents who have questions regarding this RFI may e-mail them to purchasing@cambridgema.gov by 11:00 a.m., Wednesday, June 19, 2024.
- c) Response Submission. All responses to this RFI should be due no later than 11:00 a.m. on June 27, 2024. Respondents should submit one (1) electronic copy via e-mail to purchasing@cambridgema.gov and may, if they choose, also submit hard copies to the Office of the Purchasing Agent, Room 303, City Hall, 795 Massachusetts Avenue, Cambridge Massachusetts 02139. All responses must include on the first page the official name (if any) of the firm or entity submitting the response. Please consecutively number all pages of the response.
- d) Additional Information. The City of Cambridge retains the right to request additional information from respondents. The City may request further explanation or clarification from any and all respondents during the RFI review process.

II. Costs.

By submitting a response, respondents agree that any cost incurred in responding to this RFI, or in support of activities associated with this RFI, shall be the sole responsibility of respondent. The city shall not be held responsible for any costs incurred by respondents in preparing their respective responses to this RFI.

III. Public Record.

All responses to this RFI will be public record under the Commonwealth's Public Records Law, Mass. Gen. L. Ch. 66 s. 10, regardless of confidentiality notices set forth on such writings to the contrary.

IV. Information Requested

- a) Company Name (please list parent company as well)
- b) Company Address:
- c) Company Website:
- d) Contact name and information (e-mail address required)

Provide a description of your company and the basis of your expertise in offering a response to this RFI.

Cambridge Community Development Department – Request for Information
Small Business Technical Assistance Programs

Background

Since the early 2000s, the City of Cambridge has offered over 400 workshops for Cambridge residents and businesses owners interested in starting and growing their businesses. In recent years, the city has expanded its technical assistance with one-on-one coaching services with experts in specific business areas to help both brick and mortar and home-based small business. The goal of both services is to use our resources and partnerships to help establish, sustain, and grow small businesses in Cambridge.

In Fiscal Year 2025 (FY25), the City of Cambridge's Economic Opportunity and Development Division is considering furthering its Small Business Development Workshops and Coaching Programs. Through this Request for Information (RFI), the City of Cambridge is seeking information about the skill sets of providers across the following technical assistance categories:

- Business planning & formation
- Business strategy
- Legal, Accounting
- Bookkeeping
- Marketing/branding
- Financial planning/financial literacy
- Succession planning, specifically employee ownership and cooperative planning
- Interior design/store layout
- Contracting, bid response support.
- other topics that may benefit a small business.

This RFI is intended to allow the City to be better informed regarding the business education opportunities and programs already available in the marketplace. Knowledgeable vendors with experience similar to those described in the description should respond to the inquiry form (attached). Please note that this inquiry does not guarantee any paid projects at present or in the future.

The Request

The Economic Opportunity and Development Division is considering expanding current workshop training and providing concentrated one-on-one assistance to continue to support Cambridge business owners. The primary goal of this request for information is to solicit input from knowledgeable providers in the following areas: business strategy, legal, accounting, marketing, and other topics that may benefit a small business.

APPENDIX A – INFORMATIONAL RESPONSES

Please submit your responses to the following questions via email to purchasing@cambridgema.gov

Part One – Tell us about yourself (up to three pages)

Please tell us more about why you are submitting a response to this request for information, and how your background (and the background of your team) qualifies you as a provider, and in what area of technical assistance (be specific).

We are open to all types of experience and expertise, whether academic, professional, or personal.

Part Two – Tell us about your experience (up to five pages total)

- What are some of the services that you or your firm have provided to small business owners?
- What is your or your firm's experience working with public sector agencies/departments?
- What are some programs you or your firm have led providing services to low-moderate income individuals? What parts or aspects of those programs were most helpful to local businesses?
- What are some programs that you or your firm has provided to historically underserved groups such as Women, Immigrants, Veterans, and BIPOC-Owned businesses?
- What is your or your firm's experiences providing services in urban areas like Cambridge or in Cambridge?
- What is your or your firm's experience in offering services in languages other than English?
- Please provide at least two past examples of work you've done with the small business community.